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## ***June - The Month for Weddings, Graduations, and Continuing Budget Deliberations . . .***

June 2007

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### **A Note on the Budget**

Many people have reached out to me with their opinions about the proposed FY 2007/8 budget currently before the City Council.

While the City Charter calls for the budget to be adopted by June 1st, we were assured by the City's Finance Commissioner that there would be no adverse consequences to the City as long as we vote by mid-June, which we have every intention of doing.

There have been many valid questions raised by the Council Members as to the funds we are to receive from Ridge Hill, overtime and the need to fully fund our schools. While there has been a great deal of drama in the last week, we are moving towards achieving a consensus.

### **Congratulations to the Graduates!**

As summertime rolls around, I would personally like to extend hearty congratulations to all of the Yonkers graduates. I would also like to say congratulations to my own daughter, Emily, who will be graduating from high school and attending Macalester College in the fall.

I recently had the opportunity to attend the Educational Opportunity Center's commencement ceremonies at the Museum Middle School. It was wonderful to see so many Westchester residents taking advantage of these scholastic opportunities and graduating with a plethora of new skills and knowledge.



Once again, congratulations to all the graduates from Yonkers, Roosevelt, Gorton, Lincoln and Saunders High Schools, as well as Yonkers residents who go to high school, college, and graduate schools throughout the country. I wish you the best of luck in the future.

### **Yonkers Announces the Formation of the Green Policy Task Force**





The environment is rapidly emerging as a significant generational concern, and in response, the newly formed Yonkers Green Policy Task Force is attempting to lead Yonkers toward a brighter, healthier future. This committee, announced at a waterfront press conference on June 1st by the Yonkers City Council, is comprised of seven community representatives, all seven Council Members, and representatives of the Administration. The Task Force has the potential to pass important environmental and health legislation

and make a positive difference in the lives of Yonkers' residents. See the recent [Journal News article](#) about the group.

The Green Policy Task force has already had an impact on policy. The group recently met with representatives from Code Enforcement and Consumer Protections to get an update on enforcement of the seasonal leaf-blower ban and find out ways that the Task Force can help get out the word to the community. The Task Force also met with a representative from the Transportation Department of the Yonkers Board of Education, who will be working with the Task Force to help educate bus drivers and students about laws on the books that restrict bus and car idling. Both of these efforts could help improve Yonkers air quality near homes and schools, where the lungs of Yonkers' youngest citizens are most vulnerable. We were also joined at our last meeting by a student and teacher from the new [Riverside High School for Engineering and Design](#) (where RHED is Green) that will gradually phase out the old Museum Middle School and have an environmental curriculum.

The task force is also seeking the support of Mayor Amicone through the [U.S. Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement](#). When the Mayor signs the agreement, Yonkers would commit to decreasing its greenhouse gas emissions according to the standards of the United Nations Kyoto Protocol. Over 500 mayors have already signed the pledge, which stimulates incentives that have improved both environmental and economic health in participating cities.

The Yonkers City Government and the Yonkers community have welcomed the Green Policy Task Force and its efforts to improve the city. Task force meetings are held in City Hall, and interested parties and community members are welcome and encouraged to attend and can e-mail [Aaron Smith](#) for more information. Aaron, from my staff, helps to coordinate the meetings, along with Tom O'Connell, a summer intern majoring in Environmental Economics at Cornell University.

### **Celebrity Chefs to Cook up Some Fun in Honor of the Yonkers YWCA**



I will join a number of local community leaders as a celebrity chef, in an event this Sunday from 2 - 7 PM at the Royal Regency Hotel, to honor the YWCA for 115 years of commitment to community. This is one of the most fun parties of the year and it serves a great cause. All are welcome and you'll even get to try some of my famous vegetarian chili. The event will also include jazz. Tickets are \$50. We hope to see you there! Call 914-963-0640 for details.

### **Come Help Clean Up the Saw Mill River Bike Path**



On Sunday, right before *Celebrity Chefs*, I invite everyone to join me and the Yonkers Democrats in Action (YDA) to clean-up the Saw Mill River Bike Path. My family and I ride along this beautiful local trail many weekends and we want to make sure it stays green.

The YDA is a group of energetic, committed, young people who are actively looking to make a difference through political advocacy and community service. The clean-up will be Sunday, June 10th at 1pm, starting at 75 Tuckahoe Road in the Otto Brehm parking lot where the Bike Path begins (across from Rockne Road).

The Saw Mill Bike Path is a historic trail that starts here in Yonkers, on top of the old Putnam Railroad Right-of-Way, and goes North along the Saw Mill River, up through Elmsford and beyond. YDA will provide supplies but volunteers should bring work gloves. Refreshments will be available afterward at the Runyon Heights Community Center. RSVP to [Julia Smith](#) or 914-715-4952.

### Con Ed Tree Trimming Cuts Foliage Fears

The Yonkers Community Services Committee, chaired by Majority Leader Patricia McDow, recently called a meeting to address the concerns expressed by residents about the tree trimming taking place by Con Edison. Con Edison is currently undertaking a three- year tree trimming program in Westchester County that could result in a 20% reduction in the number of power outages during major storms. The majority of power outages during a given storm are caused by tree related damage to electrical wires, which this program will hopefully prevent. In addition to decreasing the chances of a power outage, the tree trimming program will also decrease the risk of a safety hazard caused by windblown trees and downed wires during a storm. Any tree removal will require the tree owner's or city's written permission.

While tree trimming is important, many residents and I were worried that Con Edison might not take the proper precautions to prevent excessive trimming or unnecessary tree removal. During the recent meeting, Con Edison said that it was taking steps to ensure that the damage to the environment will be minimal. Con Edison met with Mitch Tutoni, the Yonkers Commissioner of Parks, and they agreed that Joe Troy, the Yonkers city arborist, or other qualified staff will accompany Con Edison crews whenever they go out to oversee that the trimming is done properly and to object where necessary. Con Edison will also give the city as well as the impacted residents extensive notice when it plans to go out to trim. Furthermore, three Con Edison inspectors have now been trained as certified arborists.

One concern that a number of Council Members and residents had at the meeting is that Con Edison is not currently undertaking a tree replanting program. We feel Con Edison should certainly lend a hand in making sure that the trees they remove are replaced with new trees to keep our city green. I will continue to consider possible legislation to ensure the proper oversight and management of the tree trimming process. There have been numerous meetings by other towns and at the county-wide level addressing the Con Edison tree trimming initiative, and this is an issue we will watch very closely.

For more information on the tree trimming program, visit the [Con Edison website](#).

### Relay For Life



Relay for Life is a wonderful event to raise money for Cancer Research that takes place starting tonight at Gorton High School. Participants will walk through the night, finishing tomorrow afternoon. Events started this week at City Hall with a Relay for Life Bake Sale yesterday afternoon. On Monday I also got a hair cut from Hair Dimensions which donated money to the cancer society. Check out [Relay for Life's Yonkers website](#) to see how much they've raised and find out how you can help.



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web: <http://www.cityofyonkers.com/citycouncil/index.htm>

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